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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/743,335	12/23/2003	Hiroyuki Kuwana	4686-003	5593
22429	7590	04/18/2006	EXAMINER	
LOWE HAUPTMAN GILMAN AND BERNER, LLP			KARKHANIS, AASHISH	
1700 DIAGONAL ROAD			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
SUITE 300 /310				
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			3714	

DATE MAILED: 04/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/743,335 Examiner Aashish Karkhanis	KUWANA, HIROYUKI Art Unit 3714

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 December 2003.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 23 December 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>9/15/04, 12/2/04</u> . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

1. Claims 1 – 5 and 7 – 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nolte et al. (U.S. Patent 6,165,070).

Regarding Claims 1 – 5 and 7, Nolte discloses a gaming system for providing a game to a plurality of players including a plurality of terminals operable by the respective plurality of the players (col. 20, lins. 36 – 39; where a personal computer is a terminal over the Internet), a gaming server communicating with the plurality of the terminals, wherein the gaming server comprises a controller executing a computer program and controlling the plurality of the terminals (col. 31 – 35; where a player signs onto an Internet website containing a game program), where the controller generates a special interval for stopping a progress of the game in a special mode (col. 18, lins. 9 – 12; where spinning reels are stopped on player's command, initiating a special award result mode), the controller generates a dummy interval in a normal mode during the game (col. 18, lins. 6 – 9; where a dummy interval causes the machine to continue in an infinite loop until meaningful user input is detected signaling a reel stop position), the controller determines whether to generate the dummy interval based on an operation by at least one of the plurality of the players and the controller determines a length of the

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dummy interval based on an operation by at least one of the plurality of the players (col. 18, lins. 3 – 17; where a controller determines whether or not to continue an infinite dummy interval reel spin until a player has signaled for reels to stop spinning).

Regarding Claims 8 – 9, Nolte discloses a gaming system including a plurality of terminals operable by the plurality of players (col. 20, lins. 36 – 39; where a personal computer is a terminal over the Internet), and a gaming server capable of communicating with the plurality of the terminals, where the gaming server provides the game to the plurality of the players via each of the plurality of the terminals, where each of the plurality of the terminals is connected to the gaming server via a communications network (col. 31 – 35; where a player signs onto an Internet website containing a game program).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nolte in view of Okuda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,224,484 B1).

Regarding Claim 6, Nolte discloses a gaming system, but does not disclose a mah-jong game incorporated into the gaming system. However, Okuda teaches a mah-jong game (col. 5, lins. 45 – 55). Okuda states that any game, including a reel game may be combined with a bonus mah-jong game to extend the basic gaming system (col.

5, lins. 45 – 55). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the general reel gaming machine of Nolte with a specific mah-jong game incorporated into a reel game as taught by Okuda in order to increase excitement and enjoyment for a player.

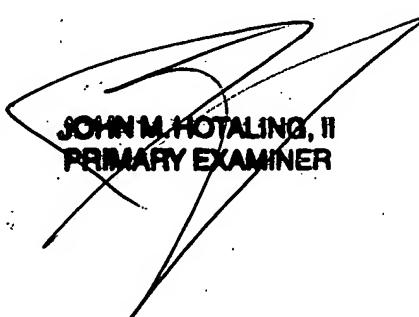
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Aashish Karkhanis whose telephone number is 571-272-2774. The examiner can normally be reached on 0800-1630 M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Scott Jones can be reached on (571) 272-4438. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

ARK



JOHN M. HOTALING, II
PRIMARY EXAMINER